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And the Stock Market Game winners areŠ

After meeting with team members, researching companies and learning about the world of investing, two teams at Sycamore High School and teams at Sycamore Middle School and Wright Elementary School emerged as the winners in the DeKalb County Challenge.

The team of Bryan Cebulski, William Davis and Sean Jatis in Dave Meyer's class at Sycamore Middle School took first place in the fourth- to eighth-grade division followed by the team of Kwaleja Casey, Sean Connors, Taylor Nelson and Aida Varda in Zak Fitzenreider's class at Wright Elementary School, who took second place in the same division.



The Sycamore High School First Place team with Principal Mark Leffler, ICEE President Joanne Dempsey, teacher Cheryl Maness, Mike Algrim of Castle Bank, Mark Hilde of Edward Jones Investments and Stephen Karlson, director of the NIU Office for Economic Education. Provided photo

The team of Brad Brown, Hugo Garcia, Joe Mikan and Jeremy Pekarek from Sycamore High School took first place in the high school division followed by the team of Tiffany Beyer, Jessica Costa, Kevin Faulkner and Max Finn who took second place in the same division. Both teams are in Cheryl Maness' class.

All teams and their teachers were recognized Thursday at an award ceremony in Northern Illinois University's Holmes Student Center.

Students and teachers were given medals, certificates and special Challenge T-shirts. The teachers also were awarded cash prizes.

Joanne Dempsey, president/executive director of Illinois Council on Economic Education, welcomed the award winners and guests.

"We previously had two teachers from Sycamore High School with 20 to 25 teams and about 70 students participating in The Stock Market Game program within DeKalb County," Dempsey said. "With this new initiative to expand the program and financial literacy within our community, we were pleased to have had 14 teachers from eight schools, 148 teams and more than 590 students participate this spring semester."

Dempsey thanked the local sponsors, Edward Jones Investments and Castle Bank, whose support allowed the participation and recognition of the teams.

Mark Hilde from Edward Jones and Mike Algrim from Castle Bank were on hand to accept special ticker tape awards, indicative of the market.

Special recognition also was given to Pat Weiss, principal at St. Mary in DeKalb, who provided space for the workshop and encouraged her teachers to incorporate the program into their

curriculums.

Weiss used a similar stock market simulation when she was a teacher.

During the presentations, Earl “Gip” Seaver, Vice Provost at NIU, spoke to the kids about the education they have gained through the program and urged them to continue to learn and prepare for their futures.

“We are holding college applications for you,” Seaver said, “and look forward to welcoming you as you will be better prepared through your participation in this program.”

John Lewis, associate vice president for University Outreach at NIU, also addressed the students and guests and reiterated the importance of continuing to learn and use their education.

Lewis began his career at NIU with the Illinois Council on Economic Education.

“NIU reaches out to our community as well as to the students who attend, and I am glad to see the increase in the participation within our community in the programs provided by ICEE, an Outreach program at NIU,” Lewis said. “An understanding of our economic system is important to the continued growth of our nation. ICEE provides the type of programs that benefit elementary and high school students who are preparing to continue their education at a university.”

After receiving their awards, each of the teams gave a PowerPoint presentation which illustrated the research and investments they made.

The students explained the decisions they made as a team and talked about what they would do differently next time.

The teams did show impressive results overall in the end.

Starting with a hypothetical \$100,000, the Sycamore High School teams ended with total equities of \$114,691 and \$114,125, illustrating the narrow difference between the two.

The Sycamore Middle School team ended with a final winning equity of \$109,347, and the Wright Elementary team ended with a second place final equity of \$108,761.

Although only four teams received awards for their accomplishments, all participating students were winners and received an education that will benefit them for life.

Many students had never heard of the stock market or investing prior to participating in the program.

They are looking forward to continuing to learn more and using the knowledge to make better choices with their money. Many of the parents were grateful for the opportunity given to their kids to participate and learn this valuable lesson.

Some parents even learned a few things from their kids.

“Although my son was not on a first- or second-place team, he still came away with an interest in learning more,” said Tricia Maxwell, development officer at ICEE and mother of a fourth-grader at Wright Elementary. “My son and I are going to meet with a financial adviser to look into using some of his own real money to invest. He will work with the adviser to watch the investments and make

decisions that could add to his savings for his college education.”

Maxwell continued, “As someone who never received any economic education and dealt with the consequences of bad decisions, I am so glad to see this program in my sons' school and in our community. I am learning right along with them.”

As part of a new initiative to bring financial literacy into DeKalb County schools, teachers at St. Mary School in DeKalb, Cornerstone Christian Academy, Wright Elementary School, Sycamore Middle School, DeKalb and Sycamore High Schools and Classical Education of Sycamore - a homeschool co-op, integrated The Stock Market Game program into their curriculum. The SMG, a program of the ICEE, is an online education program used in thousands of classrooms nationwide to help teach math, social studies, business, economics and language skills while focusing on the importance of long-term savings and investment.

The SMG is open to students in grades four through 12. Students participate in teams and are given the chance to invest a hypothetical \$100,000 in a simulated investment portfolio and to manage the portfolio during 10 to 15 weeks of the school year.

The teams conduct extensive research before buying stocks. Although the students think they're playing a game, teachers know the students are learning economic and financial concepts they'll use for the rest of their lives.

The SMG program has been attractive to teachers as it is an easy addition to the current curriculum and provides a hands-on approach which appeals to different learners.

Teachers find that students are highly motivated by this program and have really learned from it, even as young as fourth grade.

As the school year comes to a close, so does the game. Congratulations to all students on their accomplishments.

The ICEE also recognizes and honors the teachers who provided their students with this vital education.

Through continued sponsorship, the number of students reached will continue to grow, allowing that many more kids to be better prepared for their futures.

As you are out this summer, look for a student in a neon green shirt with the SMG logo and give them a high-five.

Spot a teacher in the same shirt and shake their hand. They have started the path that leads to more educated consumers.

For more information on the SMG program, contact Marty Paul or Beth Metzler at (815) 753-0356.

To view the PowerPoint presentations, go to www.econed-il.org and click on the Stock Market Game link, then list of winners.